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The CIA has rea wanting a Secrets

By David Wise

Admiral Stansfield Turner, the new director of the Central Intelligence Agency, told the Senate Intelligence Committee recently that he would "not object" to making public the total figure that the United States spends on spying and intelligence each year.

The CIA chief made it clear that he thought telling the taxpayers how much of their own money is used for cloak-and-dagger and related activities was not without some risk. But, he explained, President Carter had directed him not to oppose the release of a single, overall figure.

Turner balked, however, at going so far as to reveal the total budget of the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), or the other intelligence arms of the government.

That, he contended, might tell the Russians too much. Under sharp questioning by Sen. Gary Hart, the Colorado Democrat, Admiral Turner was not really able to explain why lump-sum total budget figures would help the Soviet Union. "There's simply no way I can reply to that in unclassified form, sir," Turner declared. He thus fell back on the intelligence operators' favorite refuge — secrecy.

If Admiral Turner had let it go at that he might have sailed safely into port, but to support his argument for secrecy, he volunteered brightly that if he knew how the Soviets broke down their intelligence budget, he would "be very pleased."

"You don't know that?" Hart asked drily.

The audience laughed. Turner had no reply.

But, by invoking the priestly mystique of secrecy and classification, the CIA director had successfully maintained the focus where he wanted it — on keeping secrets, rather than on reforming the CIA. Despite CIA excesses and lawbreaking, amply documented by several official investigations, Turner had adopted a basically protective and defensive posture toward the intelligence agency. In his brisk, military style, he accentuates the positive. All engines full ahead.

Yet, there may be trouble in the engine room. Serious charges have recently been lodged against the CIA by John R. Stockwell, a former station chief in Africa who quit in disgust and published an open letter to Admiral Turner in *The Inquirer* last month.

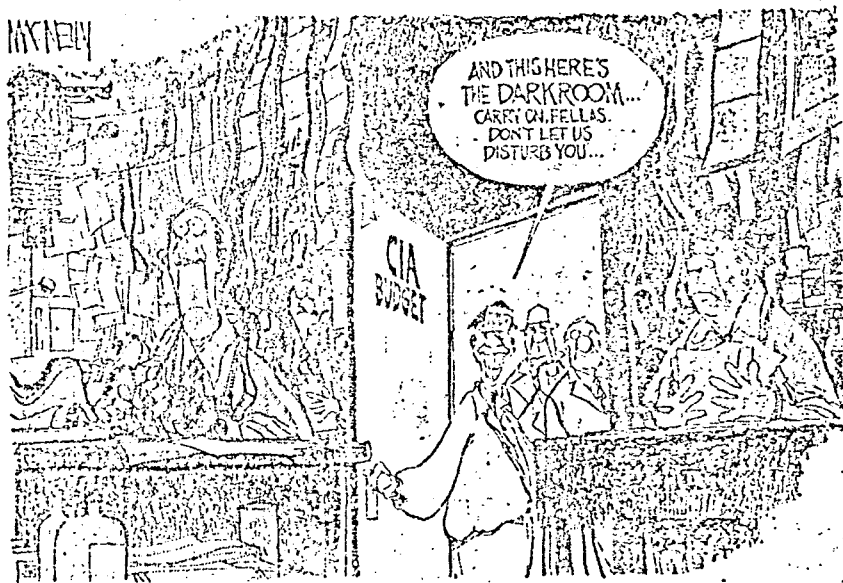
According to Stockwell, the CIA, as recently as last fall, played sleight of hand with the file of David Bufkin, an American mercenary involved in

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we play in the field." He was referring to the CIA's covert political operations.

Despite the revelations of the Church committee and the Rockefeller Commission, there is little incli-



the war in Angola. Stockwell said he had been told that CIA documents about Bufkin were dispersed to various other files "where they could easily be retrieved but would not be exposed" if Bufkin demanded access to his file under the Freedom of Information Act. Stockwell charged that such tactics were common within CIA in order to hide incriminating information from Senate investigators.

Whether or not these specific charges are accurate, they have a familiar ring. In the aftermath of Watergate, the CIA persistently hid or destroyed documents and tapes.

The CIA's William Colby reported to John Ehrlichman, with pride, that he had stalled the Watergate prosecutors for five months before conceding that the Nixon White House had

nation by either President Carter or Congress to end CIA's covert operations and restrict the agency to gathering intelligence — which is what Congress thought CIA would do when it created the agency in 1917.

There is no specific authority in the law permitting the CIA to plot assassinations, overthrow governments, or engage in other forms of covert operations. Congress could and should outlaw covert operations altogether.

Instead, both Congress and the President appear more concerned about keeping secrets. Admiral Turner has testified that he favors criminal sanctions against officials who leak national security information.

President Carter has said he would prefer to "minimize" the use of criminal penalties. But if Congress passes some version of an Official

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